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INSTRUCTIONS

TO

EXAMINING SURGEONS FOR PENSIONS.

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INSTRUCTIONS

TO

EXAMINING SURGEONS FOR PENSIONS.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, PENSION OFFICE,
Washington, D. C., 1870.

SECTION I.

The duty of an examining surgeon, under existing laws, is to examine applicants for invalid pensions, for restoration to the pension rolls, and for increase of pensions already granted; also, to examine enrolled pensioners at such stated periods as the law requires—making no examination of the three first-named classes without special orders from this office, and in each class using the designated blanks, to wit:

1.

Examining surgeon's certificate in the case of an original applicant.

No. of application, ——.

STATE: ....., COUNTY: .....,
POST OFFICE: ....., 187 .

—— hereby certify that —— have carefully examined —— —— late a ——, Co. ——, —— Reg't —— ——, in the service of the United States, who is an applicant for an invalid pension, by reason of an alleged disability resulting from —— ——. Applicant's service.

In —— opinion the said —— —— is —— incapacitated for obtaining his subsistence by manual labor from the cause above stated. Degree of disability.

Judging from his present condition, and from the evidence before ——, it is —— belief that the said disability did —— originate in the service aforesaid in the line of duty. Origin.

The disability is ——. Probable duration.

A more particular description of the applicant's condition is subjoined. Particular description.

Height, ——; weight, ——; complexion, ——; age, ——; pulse ——; respiration, ——.

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Examining Surgeon.

2.

Examining surgeon's certificate in the case of an applicant for renewal or restoration.

No. of certificate, ——.

STATE: ....., COUNTY: .....,
POST OFFICE: ....., 187 .

—— hereby certify that —— have carefully examined ——— ———,
Applicant's service. late a ——, Co. ——, —— Reg't ——— ———, in the service of the United States, who is an applicant for the ——— of an invalid pension, by reason of alleged disability resulting from ——— ———.

Degree of disability. In —— opinion the said ——— ——— is ——— incapacitated for obtaining his subsistence by manual labor from the cause above stated.

Origin. Judging from his present condition, and from the evidence before ——, it is —— belief that the said disability did —— originate in the service aforesaid in the line of duty.

Probable duration. The disability is ———.

A more particular description of the applicant's condition is subjoined.

Particular description. Height, ———; weight, ———; complexion, ———; age, ———; pulse, ———; respiration, ———.

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——— ———,
Examining Surgeon.

3.

Examining surgeon's certificate in the case of an applicant for increase of pension.

No. of certificate, ——.

STATE: ....., COUNTY: .....,
POST OFFICE: ....., 187 .

It is hereby certified that ——— ———, formerly a —— of Captain ——— Company, in the —— Regiment of ——— ———, in the war of ———, who is now paid at ——— agency at the rate of ——— dollars per month, on account, as he states, of ——— while in the line of duty in the military service of the United States, on or about the —— day of ———, 18—, at a place called ———, in the State or Territory of ———, is still suffering in consequence of said ———.

Here specify the particular disease or injury. The disability originates entirely from the injury or disease on account of which he was originally pensioned, as follows:

Height, ———; weight, ———; complexion, ———; age, ———; respiration, ———; pulse, ———.

Here state fully and accurately the character of the pensioner's disability, and how he is at present affected thereby; also, state whether the disability is *permanent* in its present degree, and whether it has been in any degree caused or protracted by vicious habits.

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—— find his disability, as described above, to be equal to, and entitling him to ———.

——— ———,
Examining Surgeon.

The surgeon will forward his report of examination direct to the Pension Office, whether the pensioner is thought to be entitled to increase or not.

4.

Surgeon's certificate of biennial, annual, or semi-annual examination, on which the pensioner draws his pension.

STATE: ....., COUNTY: .....,
POST OFFICE: ....., 187 .

—— do hereby certify that —— have carefully examined ——— ———, who was a ——— in the war ———, and was granted an invalid pension under certificate No. ——, to be paid now at the agency in ———, by reason of alleged disability resulting from ———, which he states to have been received in the line of duty while he was in the military service of the United States.

Pensioner's service.

Be particular to give certificate No.

Agency where to be paid.

In —— opinion the said pensioner's disability, from the case aforesaid, continues at ———.

State whether disability continues; and, if so, its present degree.

A more particular description of the pensioner's condition is subjoined:

Height, ———; weight, ———; complexion, ———; age, ———; respiration, ———; pulse, ———.

Particular description.

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———— ————,
Examining Surgeon.

SECTION II.

The salient points to be kept in view during these examinations are as follows:

1. What disability, if any, actually exists?

2. If a disability exists, in what degree does it disable the applicant from subsisting by manual labor?

3. What are the reasonable probabilities of the disability having resulted from service in the military or naval services of the United States, judging from the history given?

4. How far do the habits of the applicant seem to affect his disability, both as regards its origin and continuance?

5. What is the probable duration of the disability?

SECTION III.

In all these inquiries it will be necessary to receive the applicant's statements with patience and due allowance; yet justice requires that no rate of pension shall be recommended on any mere statement of physical disqualification, unsustained by the existence of such structural changes or pathological conditions as are known to accompany the particular form of injury or disease complained of.

SECTION IV.

In estimating the degree of disability some rules may be laid down, though many injuries and diseases can only be estimated from the circumstances surrounding the specific cases.

A.—The temporary disuse of a limb, or a disease of a temporary character equivalent thereto, will be rated at total, or eight dollars per month.

B.—The permanent disuse or loss of a limb, or a disease or wound of a permanent character equivalent thereto, will be rated at third grade, or fifteen dollars per month, the statement being made in terms that said disease or wound "*is equivalent to the loss of a hand or foot for purposes of manual labor*," and permanent in that degree.

C.—The existence of a *permanent* disability disabling from *all* manual labor entitles the subject to the rating of second grade, or twenty dollars per month.

D.—The existence of a permanent disability rendering the aid of an attendant or nurse necessary entitles the subject to the rating of first grade, or twenty-five dollars per month.

E.—These ratings apply to officers and privates alike so far as the grades of rank admit of such application; for instance, a colonel's "total," simply, would give him thirty dollars; therefore, none of the provisions of the act of Congress dated June 6, 1866, affect him; neither are the lieutenant colonel and major affected thereby, for the same reason; but a captain, if he is entitled to a first grade of pension, is benefited by being so rated, as also are lieutenants.

F.—Officers and privates may be rated for disabilities in any degree less than "total" not below one-fourth; in the instance of a private, the rate may be stated as one-fourth, three-eighths, one-half, five-eighths, three-fourths, seven-eighths, as the case requires; and, in like manner, the rating of an officer's disability may be stated at any point from one-fourth to the full amount established by law, in accordance with the facts. But none of the grades made by the act of Congress dated June 6, 1866, are subject to fractional rating; as, to entitle to these grades, the claimant must be *completely* and *permanently* disabled.

G.—The simple loss of an eye is a one-half disability. The loss of an index finger or great toe is three-eighths; of a thumb, one-half; of a finger or one of the smaller toes, each one-fourth. Yet these ratings are not absolute, for a tender cicatrix would modify them. Single hernia, uncomplicated, one-half; double hernia, three-fourths.

The results of operations in the carpus or metacarpus, tarsus or metatarsus, will be estimated in accordance with the utility of the remaining structures for purposes of manual labor. No general rule can be laid down. Syme's and analogous operations, if perfectly successful, should not, necessarily, leave a limb sufficiently disabled to bring it within the rating of disability prescribed by the act of June 6, 1866; while an unsuccessful attempt may have left it fully as great a disability as would an amputation in the leg. The question of deformity must be considered from two points of view; an injury resulting in much deformity will generally disable by reason of structural change, and deformity

may be in itself a bar to obtaining opportunity for subsistence by manual labor at the customary price of said labor.

H.—Certificates are forwarded direct to this office, in all cases excepting those of periodical examinations, which are sent to the Pension Agent for whose information and guidance they are intended, with the number of the certificate marked on the envelope, thus: "102,000," (nothing more;) and in every instance the surgeon will keep the records of his action on the blanks furnished him for that purpose, which records will thenceforth become public property in his custody.

Certificates, and all official statements, will be addressed, unpaid, as follows:

THE COMMISSIONER OF PENSIONS,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FOR MEDICAL REFEREE.

I.—Certificates of examinations are required to be made in the handwriting of the examining surgeon, duly signed, numbered, and indorsed; and if erased or interlined, such alterations will be certified to.

K.—When an applicant alleges two or more causes of disability each will receive attention and be rated separately. This is very necessary, from the fact that several disabilities are often stated to have arisen in the service, of which legal evidence of origin therein may exist only as to one.

N. B.—It may here be remarked that at this time about thirty certificates are daily returned to surgeons for correction or completion. The following are the errors usually fallen into:

Number of claim not given.
Certificates not signed or dated.
Disabilities not rated separately.
Disabilities not rated at all.
Description of wound or disease insufficient for purposes of evidence.
The blanks not filled and indorsed.

SECTION V.

PERIODICAL EXAMINATIONS.

L.—Biennial examinations of army and navy invalid pensioners are provided for by act of Congress approved March 3, 1859; on every alternate odd year, (the next being in 1871,) on September 4, or after. At these examinations the only question to determine is the *continuance* of the disability on account of which the claimant was originally pensioned. Periodical examinations may be required by the terms of the certificate, and will continue to be made until two biennial periods shall have passed subsequently to the date on which the certificate issued, and not, as heretofore, from date of commencement of pension. Thus, "if a pension

certificate bears date prior to March 4th, of a biennial (odd) year, an examination will be due upon the payment to Sept. 4, and will take effect from the 4th of June next preceding. Annual and semi-annual examinations will govern the preceding quarterly payment, instead of the semi-annual payment."

The foregoing applies alike, to army and navy pensions.

SECTION VI.

BOARDS OF EXAMINING SURGEONS.

Boards of examining surgeons are permanently organized, under special instructions from this office, in all the large cities of the Union; the number of members composing these boards is from two to five, according to the exigencies of the service.

When a board is composed of two members only, the duties of president and treasurer, or secretary and treasurer, will devolve on one person.

The acts of Congress defining the duties of examining surgeons apply equally to boards of surgeons, as also do the regulations of the Pension Bureau; excepting that boards will examine only on the first Wednesday in each month, unless otherwise specially instructed.

Unless a board of surgeons is composed of more than three members, the signature of each member will be attached to the certificates made. This rule will be invariable, excepting when waived for unavoidable causes, absence or sickness, and then the reason why the certificate is not signed by the full board will be stated on the back thereof.

SECTION VII.

ACCOUNTS.

I.—*Accounts for examination of applicants for pension and increase of pension* must be rendered in duplicate, upon Form 5, at the close of each month direct to the Pension Office, (in the same manner as the certificates,) *accompanied by the order for the examination.* If thus forwarded, accounts will be immediately examined, and one approved copy returned to the surgeon, who will sign the duplicate receipts, Form 6, and inclose the whole to the pension agent designated therein for payment.

No accounts will be approved unless the order of the office to the surgeon accompanies it. Names of applicants examined must be alphabetically arranged. Each account will embrace all those examined during a month, and none others.

If for "increase" add, in right-hand column, opposite the name, "For increase, certificate No. —." If "original," give company and regiment.

II.—*Accounts for periodical examination of pensioners* will also be prepared in duplicate, Form 7, immediately after the close of each month, and forwarded simultaneously, one copy to this office, and the other,

accompied by duplicate receipt, Form 8, to the pension agent by whom the pension is payable for payment. With the check for the payment of the fee, the Pension Agent will return the postage incurred in sending the certificates to the Agency.

As the pension agent has the necessary means for auditing the account only while the vouchers of the pensioner are in his possession, which by law he is required to forward to the accounting officer within ten days from the close of the month, *surgeons must render their accounts promptly at the close of each month*, else they will be returned unpaid; in which case the only relief will be by application to the Third Auditor to examine the vouchers and audit their accounts, causing delay and inconvenience to the surgeon, and trouble to the government.

Names of pensioners must be alphabetically arranged. All those who have been examined in the month and payable at the same agency will be embraced in one account, and none others. Surnames should precede Christian names, the latter written out in full. Initial or middle letters should be carefully given.

The certificate number should be plainly given, and the rate must correspond with that set forth in the certificate, and each correctly express the estimate of the degree of pensioner's disability; an error in either is disastrous to the pensioner. Hundreds of pensioners at the biennial examinations of 1869 were subjected to an unjust and unintentional reduction by the inadvertence of examining surgeons in this respect.

Settlement.—As periodical certificates (Form 4) are now sent by mail direct to the pension agent, he is prepared to audit the account as soon as the certificate is received.

III.—*Accounts for special examinations of pensioners* will be rendered and paid upon Form 9, in the same manner and under the same general instructions as accounts for applicants, paragraph I. Prepare the account according to the head-note on the blank.

BLANKS.

The following is a list of blanks furnished for the use of examining surgeons:

Pamphlet of instructions.

1. Certificate of original or primary examination of an APPLICANT for a pension.

2. Certificate of examination for renewal or restoration of a pension under act July 14, 1862.

3. Certificate of examination for increase of a pension under act June 6, 1866.

4. Certificate of periodical examination of PENSIONERS.

5. Alphabetical list or account for primary examinations of APPLICANTS, or for the increase of a pension, under any act, on a quarter sheet.

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5. (Large.) Same as preceding, on a half sheet.
6. Duplicate receipts to accompany five accounts.
7. Alphabetical list or account of fees for periodical examinations of pensioners, on a quarter sheet.
7. (Medium.) Same as preceding, on a half sheet.
7. (Large.) Same as preceding, on a full sheet.
8. Duplicate receipts to accompany seven accounts.
9. Accounts for special examinations, with travel.
10. For civil surgeons. See R on voucher list.

H. VAN AERNAM.

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